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Identical letters dated 3 April 2009 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the joint statement adopted by the participants of the Fifth General Meeting of the United Nations system and the Caribbean Community and its associated institutions, which was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 9 and 10 February 2009 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 114 (e). I also request that the joint statement be circulated as a document of the Security Council in response to resolutions 1631 (2005) and 1809 (2009), particularly paragraph 17.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon

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Annex

Joint statement of the Fifth General Meeting of representatives of the Caribbean Community and the United Nations system

9 and 10 February 2009, New York

1. The Fifth General Meeting of representatives of the United Nations system and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and its associated institutions was convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 9 and 10 February 2009. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, delivered an opening address. The Secretary-General of CARICOM, Edwin Carrington, also made an opening statement. The meeting, which enjoyed wide participation from representatives of the CARICOM secretariat and its associated institutions as well as representatives of the United Nations system, was co-chaired by Lolita Applewhaite, Deputy Secretary-General of CARICOM, and B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations for Political Affairs.

2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations welcomed the opportunity to deepen cooperation between the United Nations system and CARICOM. He expressed concern at the evidence of the increasing vulnerability of the Caribbean region, which faces crises in food and energy security while dealing with the impact of climate change and global financial turmoil. He also highlighted the pressing security challenges, particularly those posed by increased trafficking in narcotics and small arms in the region. The Secretary-General reiterated the strong commitment of the United Nations to strengthening the partnership with CARICOM and commended the collaborative work being undertaken between United Nations system and CARICOM institutions.

3. The Secretary-General of CARICOM welcomed the General Meeting as an important forum for pursuing cooperation with the United Nations system. He highlighted the impact of the global financial and economic crisis on the small vulnerable States of the Community. He expressed appreciation for the continued commitment of the United Nations system to supporting the development objectives of CARICOM as reflected in the wide range of activities being undertaken by CARICOM institutions and United Nations system partners. He also underscored the need to address the security challenges facing the region. He highlighted the decision of CARICOM to include security as the fourth pillar of the Community, along with economic integration, foreign policy coordination and functional cooperation. He reiterated the call for considering the reopening of a regional office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the Caribbean.

4. The meeting received a report on progress in the implementation of commitments made at the Fourth General Meeting, held in Georgetown, Guyana, in 2007, addressing in particular cooperation in the areas of sustainable development, climate change, disaster management, food security, governance and security and information and communication technologies. The meeting acknowledged ongoing challenges in collecting complete, current information on all United Nations and CARICOM cooperation activities in the region, given the existence of different planning and monitoring frameworks, the absence of a harmonized approach to reporting and the existence of multiple lines of accountability within the United Nations system.

5. The meeting considered a proposal for the establishment of a Regional Strategic Framework for planning and monitoring collaboration between the United Nations system and CARICOM, with a view to ensuring that activities undertaken are aligned with the strategic objectives of the Caribbean region. It would also ensure that United Nations system resources are deployed most efficiently to deliver measurable benefits to the region. It would promote the awareness of achievements, impact, best practices and lessons learned from the collaboration between the United Nations system and CARICOM (inclusive of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)) and its associated institutions. The proposed framework would focus on regional priorities and integrate a results-based approach for the monitoring and evaluation of all activities in the region. The meeting considered a viable structure for the strategic framework.

6. The meeting acknowledged considerable coordination efforts by the United Nations system in the region, particularly emphasizing the role of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Directors' Team as a working mechanism for providing strategic multidisciplinary support and oversight to address pressing issues and for strengthening the partnership with CARICOM. The meeting also noted the coordination and monitoring role played by the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, a permanent subsidiary body of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), with representation at the ministerial level.

7. The meeting recognized the progress made and the work still to be done in the implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. This included the harmonization of laws and administrative procedures, the facilitation of movement of skilled workers, the need for greater public awareness and buy-in to the idea of a single market and economy; private sector engagement; the harmonization of the CARICOM integration process with that of the advanced integration initiatives of OECS; the expansion of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy to include Haiti; and the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the free movement of skills and the related treatment of contingent rights, particularly in relation to the movement of persons with dependants.

8. The meeting welcomed advancement in the introduction of the framework for the Single Market and Economy, including financial policy integration, real sector policy integration and institution-building. In this regard, the meeting noted in particular the efforts being made to integrate the financial services sector, the insurance sector and the securities sector as well as to harmonize interest rates and investment and fiscal policies. In respect of real sector development, the meeting heard the challenges of coordinating and integrating policies on agriculture, tourism and transportation and the need for appropriate policies on energy, including renewable energy. Promoting energy efficiency measures was seen to have particular importance both in terms of economic development and environmental protection. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) committed its continued support to CARICOM in this regard. The meeting noted the ongoing efforts to create and strengthen industry associations, regulatory organizations, sectoral development institutions and institutions to encourage pooling of resources in the region.

9. The meeting was apprised of the extremely close interrelationship between terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems and the economies in the Caribbean

region, which imposes significant challenges for the management of the region's environment and economies. It was underscored that a resilient environment is essential to the long-term prosperity and quality of life in the region and effective functioning of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. The meeting heard that sustainable development issues are often ignored in donor funding and other support mechanisms. Efforts by CARICOM to develop and implement a common environment and natural resources framework aimed at improving the environmental quality and conditions in the Community were noted. It was recommended that the regional coordinating mechanism established at the subregional headquarters of ECLAC in Trinidad and Tobago to facilitate the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation should become operational in order to complement the policy coordination efforts of the United Nations system in the area of sustainable development.

10. The meeting considered ongoing efforts to protect the Caribbean Sea and promote the sustainable use of fisheries, improved ocean governance and maritime delimitation. The meeting heard a request for assistance on a common fisheries policy; expansion of aquaculture; fisheries information management; research, training and development; and support for resource management for marine species, especially the commercially important queen conch (*Strombus gigas*) and spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*) species. The need for increased knowledge and understanding of existing multilateral environment agreements that can be used to support sustainable development and conservation of fisheries and marine ecosystems was identified. A further call was made for support to prepare a plan for the implementation of the 2009 Caribbean ministerial declaration on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Caribbean. Concerning food security, the meeting recognized progress made so far towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 1 and agreed that urgent action was needed to protect the gains made so far on food security in the Caribbean. The meeting received information on the proposed United Nations comprehensive framework for action on agriculture and agreed with the proposal of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations that an inter-institutional and results-based approach be adopted.

11. The meeting took note of the region's agenda for building resilience in response to the impact of climate change and welcomed ongoing initiatives designed to strengthen the region's response to climate change, notably the Caribbean Climate Change Strategy. The meeting acknowledged United Nations and CARICOM collaboration to achieve a common regional position on how to address climate change and adaptation as a priority area in the regional strategic framework.

12. While efforts to strengthen the strategic framework for comprehensive disaster management were recognized, the meeting underscored the need for continued attention to strategies for disaster management and resilience-building in the region. The ongoing support of the United Nations system in respect of institutional support for preparedness, response and recovery, as well as mainstreaming disaster management, was acknowledged.

13. The meeting emphasized the importance of capacity development both for CARICOM member States and regional institutions. In this regard the meeting noted the challenges faced by these States in fulfilling their reporting obligations in respect of the Millennium Development Goals because of capacity constraints, and

welcomed the commitment of regional institutions and the United Nations system to provide necessary support. The meeting also acknowledged the need to provide more technical support to smaller States. The meeting heard a call from OECS for the production of timely United Nations flagship publications which reflect proactive and responsive research and analysis about the specific issues challenging the Caribbean region, in particular those challenges that are peculiar to the smallest countries. UNDP committed itself to supporting CARICOM in defining an integrated capacity development approach towards the improvement of organizational arrangements.

14. The meeting also noted that, in respect of information and communications technology, full advantage had not been taken of the liberalization process in the telecommunications sector within the region. In particular, the meeting recognized that one of the most notable deficiencies was the insufficient use of broadband technology, largely owing to the high cost of this technology. The meeting proposed that information and communications technology should be included as a priority area in the regional strategic framework.

15. The meeting took note of the fact that CARICOM member States are among the most highly indebted countries of the world but their designation as middle-income countries stymies access to concessionary financing and other flows of official development assistance. The meeting therefore welcomed the idea of establishing innovative paths to engage the private sector and acknowledged the importance of developing stronger public-private partnerships and engaging with foundations and multinational corporations.

16. The meeting repeatedly heard of the need for strengthened data collection and statistical analysis to provide standardized, accurate, current information on all the challenges facing the region and to improve evidence-based programme and policy development. The meeting acknowledged the collaboration between CARICOM and the United Nations system in improving capacity for data collection and analysis as a priority area for inclusion in the regional strategic framework. The meeting recognized the need to rationalize methodologies for data collection and analysis and to ensure wide dissemination of information to support evidence-based policymaking and the CARICOM information and communication objectives. It was proposed that a vulnerability index using indicators relevant to the Caribbean region be developed.

17. The meeting noted with concern the continuing negative effect of the global financial and economic crisis on the Caribbean region. The crisis has had an impact on critical economic sectors such as tourism and the financial sector, on remittances and emigration. The World Bank forecast is for foreign direct investment flows to fall to one tenth of 2007 levels. The meeting acknowledged the need for CARICOM — supported by the United Nations system, especially the specialized agencies — to take swift and urgent action to prevent reversal of the gains that have been derived from past economic growth and stability. The meeting noted the importance of further developing and implementing policies that stimulate the growth of the productive sectors. As an immediate action to address falling investment flows, the United Nations Fund for Investment Partnerships expressed its willingness to support a Caribbean Investment Office that would encourage new investment in the region. The meeting acknowledged that the regional strategic framework should address expanded United Nations assistance to CARICOM for

capacity-building to support the progressive implementation of sectoral integration policies in agriculture and fisheries, tourism and especially air and maritime transportation, whose current functioning hinders improvements in productivity and economic growth.

18. The meeting acknowledged that the Millennium Development Goals had received much attention by CARICOM and that, for the most part, CARICOM countries were on track for their achievement. However, the effect of the global financial and economic crisis would no doubt impede further progress towards the development targets unless urgent action was taken by Governments to provide social safety nets for those groups that were most affected by poverty, unemployment and social marginalization. Regarding the regional strategic framework, the meeting proposed that the United Nations system and CARICOM explore the feasibility of establishing new targets for CARICOM countries that would go beyond the existing objectives to include, inter alia, science, research and development; capacity-building; vulnerability analysis; modernization of law enforcement infrastructures and public sector administration; access to efficient and renewable energy; and rolling back the high incidence of non-communicable diseases.

19. The meeting recognized the high percentage of the Caribbean population below the age of 24. The meeting was informed that there is evidence that Caribbean adolescents and youth are confronted with new challenges that need to be addressed to prevent psychological, social and economic vulnerabilities and alienation. Adolescents and young women are especially impacted by gender-based violence, including sexual violence, and reproductive health problems. Urgent, innovative and strategic rights-based interventions would be required to address these problems. Although many countries have youth and sectoral policies in place to address the needs of young people, implementation is lagging most often because of lack of funding. The meeting proposed that CARICOM, in keeping with its role of addressing implementation gaps from a regional perspective, should establish a regional observatory to monitor child, adolescent and youth rights. In addition, the meeting recommended that programmatic interventions to address the needs of young people should focus on four key areas: (a) health, including mental and sexual and reproductive health; (b) education and skills training; (c) employment and income generation, with microcredit inputs; and (d) life skills and citizenship development. The United Nations Population Fund pledged its continued support to CARICOM in the realm of youth. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) underscored the importance of and its commitment to supporting buy-in by youth in the developmental thrust of the region.

20. The meeting also welcomed the first Regional Framework for Action for Children 2008-2015, adopted at the twelfth special meeting of the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development. The framework takes an integrated approach to addressing the rights to survival, development, protection, dignity and participation of the children within the Caribbean Community. It underscores the importance of measures to address the impact of violence on children, to increase retention rates at the secondary and tertiary levels of the educational system and to provide treatment to children living with HIV/AIDS and protection to those who are vulnerable. The meeting was informed that different countries and agencies utilized different definitions of the term "child" especially in relation to laws concerning the minimum age of employment and apprenticeship. There is a need to standardize the

definition across the region; in particular the age range should be the same in every Caribbean country. UNICEF recommended that special emphasis be placed on children who are between the ages of 10 and 14, when the greatest opportunity exists to facilitate a positive transition into adolescence and to facilitate their care and protection from violence, exploitation, HIV/AIDS and the impact of natural disasters.

21. While the meeting welcomed the success achieved thus far in mainstreaming gender in socio-economic programmes, the need for the integration of gender perspectives in policymaking was noted. The meeting took note of the economic vulnerability of female-headed households given the disproportionate burden of care falling on women and their higher levels of unemployment. Gender inequalities persist, in particular in respect of indigenous women's access to education; aspects of health care, including reproductive health; and economic opportunities, including credit. The meeting noted that the current economic situation would likely cause further deterioration in this regard. The need for Governments to provide social support for single-headed households was raised. The meeting was informed that political representation by women was uneven, ranging from zero per cent in one country to a current high of 29 per cent. A concern was expressed about the high rate of violence against women in the region, especially sexual assaults, which are subject to underreporting and largely unresponsive justice systems. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) welcomed the CARICOM proposal to establish a special rapporteur on gender-based violence as consistent with the goals of the current campaign of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on violence against women. UNIFEM indicated its intention to support the initiative.

22. The meeting recognized that the Caribbean has one of the highest net migration rates in the world. The meeting noted that the female migration rate is recorded as the highest in the world and the pattern of migration is complex, including movement by workers, economic migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. In order to address the complexity of the migration phenomena in the region, the meeting considered a number of possible policy actions that could foster the meaningful contribution of migrants in their home and host countries. The meeting agreed that systematic monitoring of migratory trends, including remittances, would be essential and required migration statistics, shared data and information for use in the formulation of appropriate policy responses. The United Nations and the International Organization for Migration expressed interest in continuing to work with CARICOM on the issue of migration. UNDP invited contributions from CARICOM to the *Human Development Report 2009*, which would have migration as its theme.

23. The meeting welcomed the establishment of the Caribbean regional strategic framework on HIV/AIDS and recognized its central role in providing a basis for international collaboration. However, the meeting took note of the many challenges that still remain and considered a number of recommendations to address these challenges. These include the establishment of an enabling environment for the reduction of stigmatization and the enhancement of human rights; making better use of legislative frameworks to ease discrimination and facilitate access to care and treatment facilities; building on the achievements of existing institutions; increased attention to prevention opportunities; and the establishment of a technical support facility for response to HIV/AIDS in emergencies.

24. The meeting recognized that the region had the highest rates of criminal violence per capita in the world and noted that sexual violence, human trafficking, drug trafficking and the illicit trade in small arms were also on the increase. CARICOM reiterated that the issue of security remained a primary concern for the region. It was noted that the financial crisis would likely impose a negative impact on the social fabric of societies in the region, resulting in even higher levels of migration, crime and illegal trafficking in drugs and arms. The meeting recognized the cyclical link between increasing rates of violent crime and urban conditions, youth unemployment, income inequity and arms availability. The meeting expressed concern over the severity of the medium-term impact of crime on economic growth and development in the Caribbean region. The meeting recognized the recent establishment of the CARICOM Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and its goal of putting in place effective mechanisms for joint security initiatives and information-sharing. The meeting noted the opportunities for joint work between IMPACS and the United Nations system. The meeting agreed that regional efforts to combat transnational organized crime, including protection of victims of trafficking, should be expanded and included as a priority area in the regional strategic framework. Support for these efforts is anticipated from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and would include establishment of a focal point in the CARICOM secretariat. The Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat of the United Nations also offered to work with CARICOM to mobilize the interest of donors with a view to establishing a focal point for disarmament and non-proliferation within the CARICOM secretariat.

25. The meeting recognized the Caribbean Community's proud record with regard to good governance. CARICOM called for more attention to constitutional change, greater transparency and accountability and greater vigilance in human rights. Institution-building for the Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians was proposed as an area to be addressed, as the assembly had remained inactive for several years. The meeting also noted that Caribbean civil society organizations could benefit from capacity-building and that the expertise of the United Nations system in that particular area would be welcomed. The meeting heard that the CARICOM Charter of Civil Society required additional support to achieve legal implementation and enforcement of reporting requirements. The meeting further agreed that United Nations support in that area would be included in the regional strategic framework and that a capacity-building strategy based on an assessment of CARICOM requirements in the area of governance was necessary. The Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat of the United Nations offered support in a number of related areas including strengthening early warning systems, good offices and dispute resolution mechanisms. There was also agreement to support constitutional reform and electoral monitoring and to replicate existing social cohesion programmes at the regional level. Discussions between CARICOM and the Department of Political Affairs concerning voter registration and electoral observer missions would continue.

26. The meeting recognized the mutually reinforcing nature of development, security and human rights as well as efforts made by CARICOM member States aimed at ensuring continuing respect for internationally recognized civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. However, the meeting noted some implementation gaps in meeting legal obligations stemming from the core international human rights treaties to which CARICOM countries are parties. The

meeting was informed that treaty bodies recommended the abolition of the death penalty; accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; amending laws relating to the death penalty in keeping with article 6 of the Covenant; introducing a legal definition of torture, compatible with article 7 of the Covenant and article 1 of the Convention against Torture; and establishment of Paris Principles-compliant national human rights institutions. The meeting heard that more could be done to increase levels of ratification of core international human rights treaties, fulfil reporting obligations and strengthen cooperation with the United Nations human rights machinery, including by extending open invitations to special procedures mandate-holders. The meeting was informed that 12 CARICOM countries would be reviewed by the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review mechanism between 2009 and 2011, which could be an opportunity for constructive engagement between the United Nations system and CARICOM.

27. The meeting discussed the proposed regional strategic framework in the context of the priorities identified in the thematic discussions. The meeting noted the number of existing regional frameworks in specialized areas of work and recognized that bilateral programming would continue between United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes and CARICOM. National-level programming would also continue. As such, the meeting agreed that the regional strategic framework would reflect those priority areas identified during the meeting where an integrated regional approach from United Nations system partners could provide added value to the collaboration between the United Nations system and CARICOM.

28. The meeting identified the following areas for attention under the regional strategic framework: integrated sector development strategies in agriculture, fisheries, tourism and transport; specific opportunities for further collaboration on crime and security; further development of information and communications technology to take advantage of liberalization through improvements in access to broadband technology; wider implementation of intellectual property rights; improved access to education and enhancement of the quality of primary, secondary and tertiary education; implementation of policies to protect Caribbean biodiversity; continued collaboration on disaster management and risk reduction; continued collaboration on health, HIV, reproductive health and youth and gender equality; food as well as energy security; an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea; tools and methodologies for monitoring coastal aquifers; support for the formulation of relevant policies to build resilience, particularly for small highly indebted countries, and to address the specificities of OECS; and strategies for encouraging capital investment through a region-wide investment entity. The meeting also agreed that the regional strategic framework should build on modalities in which the United Nations system has a comparative advantage, such as the establishment of public-private partnerships; capacity-building; South-South cooperation; access to research, data and documentation, including lessons learned and best practices; and techniques for public education and advocacy.

29. The meeting acknowledged the regional strategic framework as an enhanced planning and monitoring mechanism and considered options for implementation. The meeting agreed that the regional strategic framework should reflect a three- to five-year perspective, rather than being limited by the two-year intervals of the United Nations-CARICOM General Meetings. The meeting acknowledged the

potential offered by the Regional Directors' Team. The meeting recommended that the Regional Directors' Team should place much greater emphasis on Caribbean-specific issues and that it could be made responsible for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the regional-level activities agreed to in the context of the regional strategic framework. It was agreed that the Department of Political Affairs would complete the draft of the regional strategic framework, including in the document the rich discussion provided by the meeting before sending it to United Nations agencies for comments in preparation for a follow-up meeting with CARICOM.

30. The meeting agreed that the Department of Political Affairs, as focal point for regional organizations, would continue to facilitate dialogue on the draft regional strategic framework while monitoring immediate follow-up actions to ensure that there was no loss of momentum between this General Meeting and the next one.

31. The meeting agreed that the Sixth United Nations-CARICOM General Meeting would be held at CARICOM headquarters in Georgetown, Guyana, in 2011.